

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on August 10, 2001, Samuel E. Wahba, pharmacist and owner of Sam's Drug and Medical, Palm Harbor, FL, was found guilty of one count violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act, one count Medicaid provider fraud, and two counts grand theft. Wahba was sentenced to 5 years probation and ordered to pay \$172.00 restitution.

Wahba was responsible for the dispensing of prescription medications to Medicaid, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and TRICARE beneficiaries. Wahba would receive telephone requests for prescription medications from physicians. In addition to billing the insurance companies for these medications, Wahba would add one of several high-dollar maintenance medications to the phone orders and bill the insurance companies for those medications. In each case reviewed, the physician denied prescribing the medications, often stating the recipient did not require such a medication, or, in some instances, the physicians were not aware of the medication or its usage. Additionally, Wahba overcharged TRICARE for durable medical equipment that was not ordered or received by the patient. Wahba caused a total loss to the Government of \$189,997.